

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SERVICES

*An Overview of
Family &
Children's Services
1990/1991*

This publication is compiled by:
Family and Children's Services Division
and
Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch
Corporate Services Division

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Family & Children's Services

PROGRAM GOALS

Child Protection with a Family Focus

Families will ensure that their children are safe from abuse and neglect. If required our intervention will assist families to fulfill this responsibility. Where this is not possible an alternative safe and stable environment will be provided that assists children developing towards independence and self-sufficiency.

Services to Support Families

The family, extended family and community will ensure their children are free from abuse and neglect and provide them with a healthy and supportive environment. Ministry services will help families meet this responsibility.

Services to Youth

Youth will take responsibility for and be involved in planning their transition to independence. Ministry services will support youth and their families in making this transition.

Native Child Welfare

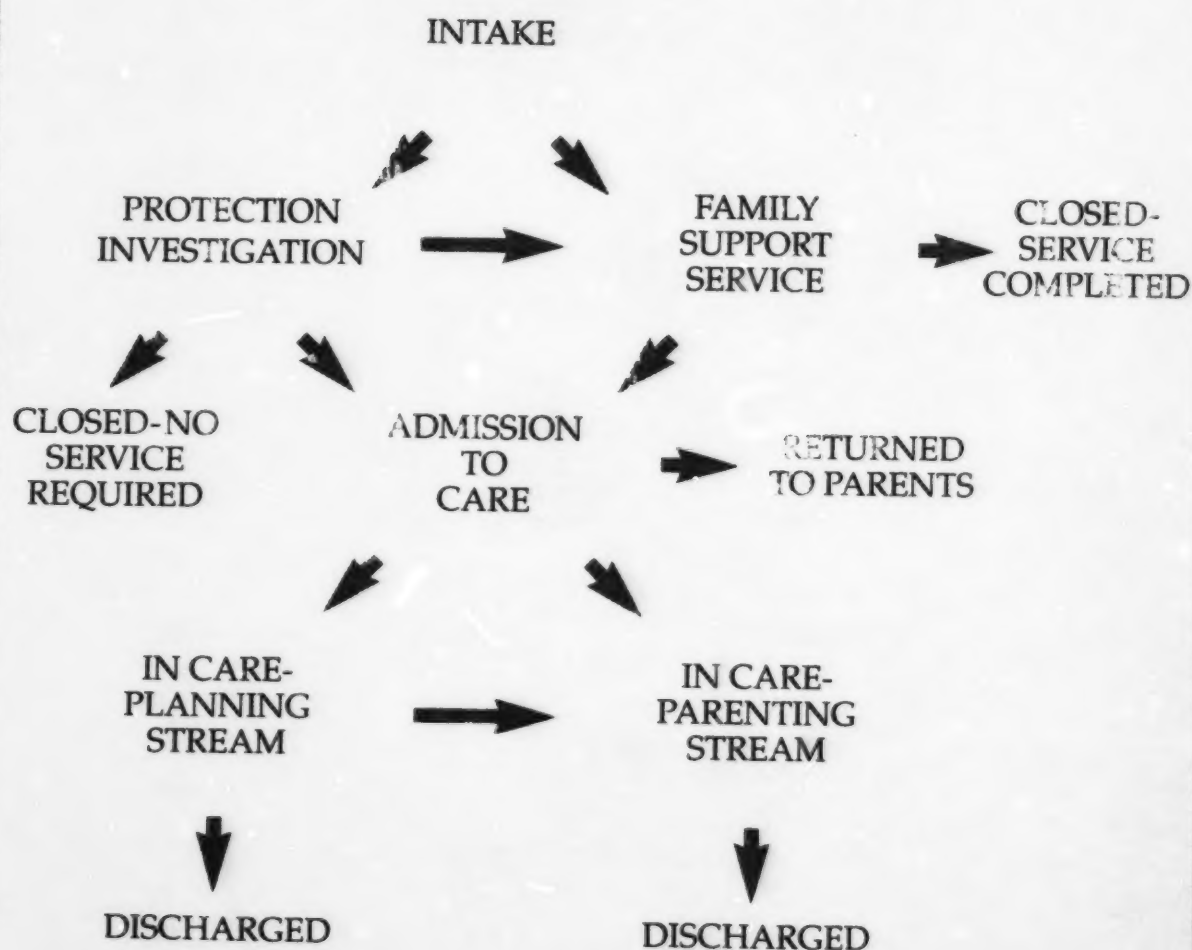
Native people, through their bands, tribal councils, organizations or from the community, will be involved in the development and be responsible for delivery of services to their children and families. Ministry services will reflect and respect the unique culture and heritage of Native people.

Adoption Services

Children who cannot live with their own parents or extended family will have the benefit of a permanent home through adoption. In planning the adoption, the child's culture and heritage will be respected. Adoption services include pre-placement counselling to the relinquishing parents and child if appropriate, support to adoptive parents and post-adoption services to all members of the adoption triad.

Family & Children's Services

FLOW BETWEEN SERVICE MODULES



Environment

CHILDREN

The distribution of children in B.C. through the various age groups determines the mix of Ministry services that is required.

- After a number of years of decline the child population in B.C. is again on the increase.
- The number of children in the 0 - 19 age group has increased by 50,700 or 6.3% since 1986. Last year the increase was 11,500 or 1.4%.
- The increasing trend is expected to continue over the next 10 years. By 1995, this age group will increase by a further 59,000 children and, by the year 2000, it is expected to increase by 105,000.
- The number of children in the 15 - 19 age group declined by 13.5% in the 10 years between 1981 and 1991, while the number of children in the 0 - 4 age group increased by 15.3%.
- This suggests a decline in the need for services oriented toward teens and an increase in services oriented toward infants.

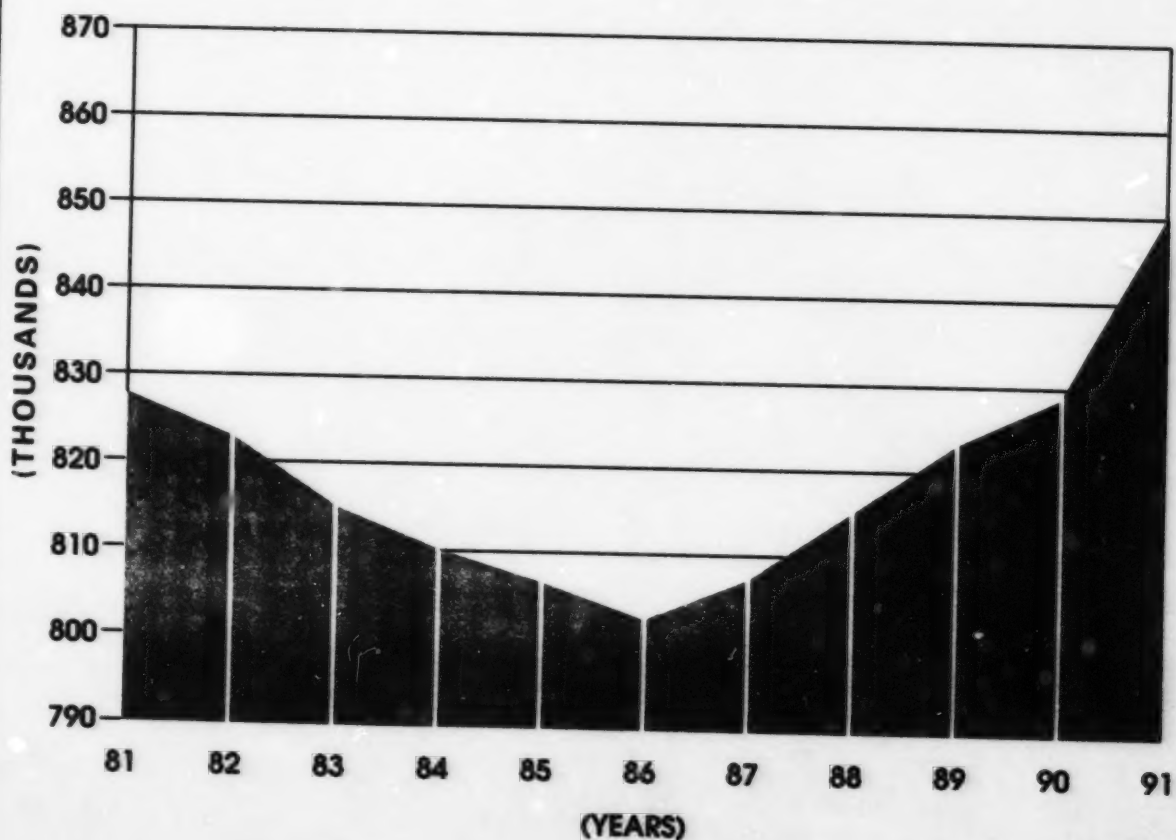
Child Population*
(Thousands)

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1991</u>	<u>% Change</u>
0 - 4	191.2	220.4	+ 15.3%
5 - 9	189.0	217.5	+ 15.1%
10-14	208.1	207.1	- 0.5%
15 - 19	<u>239.3</u>	<u>207.1</u>	<u>- 13.5%</u>
Total	827.6	852.1	+ 3.0%

*Source: Planning and Statistics Division, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

Environment

POPULATION OF CHILDREN



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

FAMILIES

Although the size of the child population determines the number of children who are potentially at risk, it is the strength of the family that determines the proportion of that group that requires service.

- The latest estimates suggest that the total number of families with children has changed very little since the 1981 census. In 1990, there were 385,300 families, up by 7,000 or 1.9%.
- However, the apparent lack of change in the total hides some very profound changes in family structure.
- Between 1981 and 1990, the number of husband-wife families declined by 14,200 or 4.4%, while lone parent families increased by 21,200 or 37.6%.
- Lone parent families tend to be more vulnerable during times of crisis and thus consume a disproportionate amount of our services. At least 47% of children admitted to care, for example, come from lone parent families.

Families (Thousands)

<u>Type</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Husband-Wife	321.9	307.7	- 4.4%
Lone Parent	<u>56.4</u>	<u>77.6</u>	<u>+ 37.6%</u>
Total	378.3	385.3	+ 1.9%

Protection

OVERVIEW

The Ministry is committed to assisting families to maintain their strength and independence. Thus, family support services are an integrated part of the process of insuring the safety and well being of children. Separation from the family only occurs where it becomes clear that the child's needs cannot be met within the family.

- There were 31,429 investigations of possible abuse or neglect in 1990/91.
- As a result of these investigations 12,961 new or revised plans for family support were formulated.
- Admissions to care totalled 5,687 during the year. Of these 2,456 or 43.2% were admitted by parental agreement and 3,183 or 56.0% were admitted by court action.

Protection

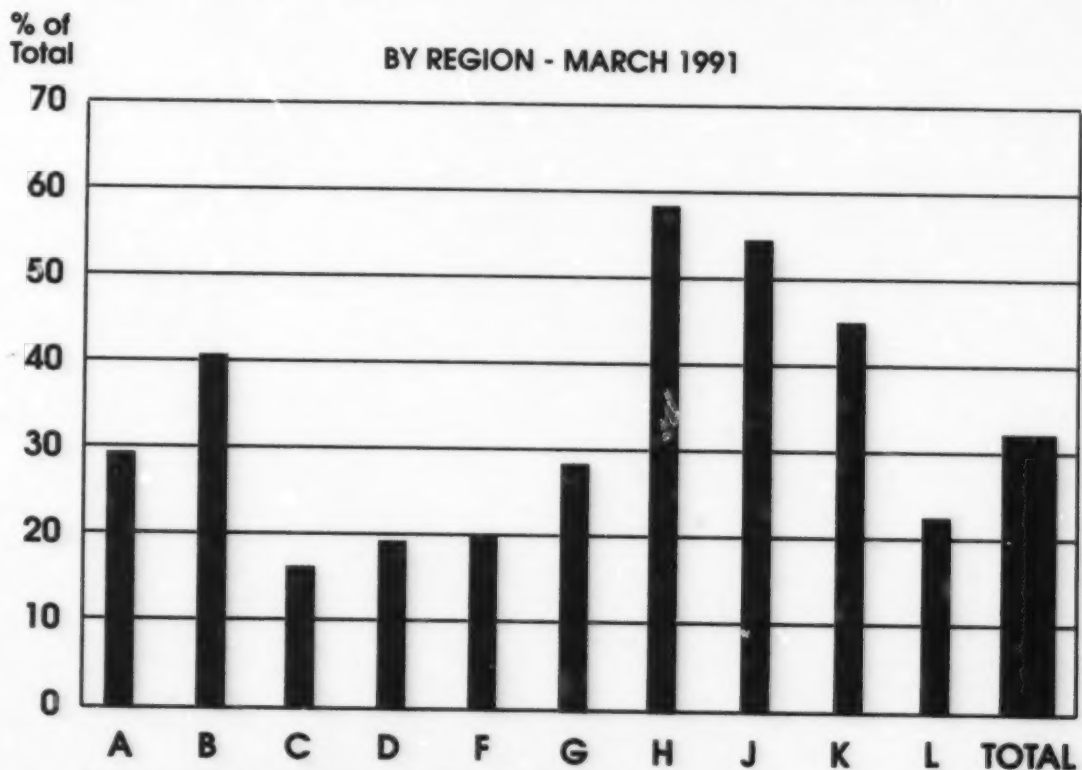
THE NATIVE COMMUNITY

Native bands and tribal councils are increasingly interested in providing protection services to their own children. The Ministry is committed to assisting in this endeavour and has entered into agreements for the development of Indian Child and Family Services.

- Agreements have been successfully made with:
 1. Nuu-Chah-Nulth Tribal Council;
 2. MacLeod Lake Band;
 3. Carrier-Sekani Tribal Council; and
 4. Spallumcheen Band.
- In addition, the Ministry has introduced a unique special Native unit for family and children's services in Vancouver.
- The number of status Native children in care has decreased over the past two years. At the same time there has been an increase in the overall population of status Native children in the province.
- Approximately 30% of all children admitted during the year were of Native origin.

Protection

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN IN CARE IN REGION WHO ARE NATIVE ORIGIN - MARCH 1991



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

INVESTIGATION

Persons who have reason to believe that a child may be in need of protection are required to make this information known to the Ministry. Upon receipt of such information an investigation is undertaken to determine if support or protective service is required.

- The Ministry undertook 31,429 investigations during 1990/91 of which 4,337 involved more than one office.
- This represented a decrease in activity of 4.7% over the previous year.
- Neglect was the most frequently cited complaint - followed by sexual abuse and physical abuse.
- All types of complaints were down from the previous year with sexual abuse showing the largest percentage decrease.

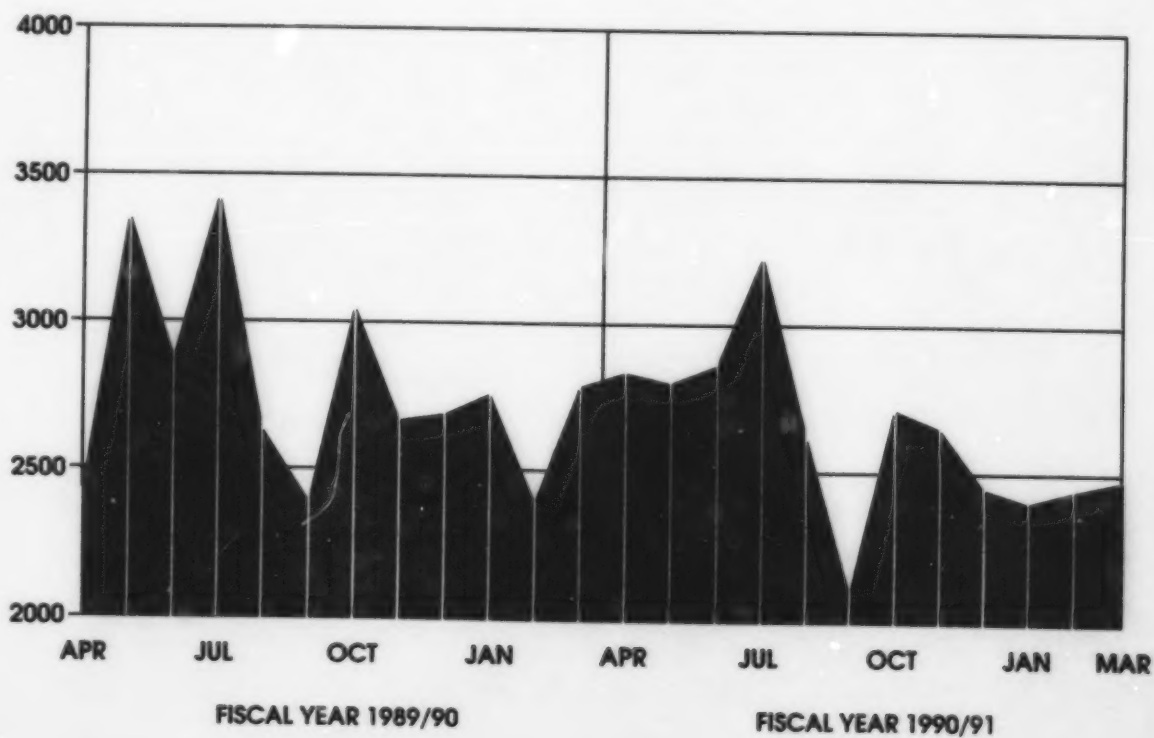
Protection Investigations

<u>Type</u>	<u>1989/90</u>	<u>1990/91</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Physical Abuse	6,500	6,349	- 2.3%
Sexual Abuse	6,943	6,412	- 7.6%
Neglect	9,340	8,846	- 5.3%
Other*	5,860	5,656	- 3.5%
Multiple Types	<u>4,319</u>	<u>4,166</u>	<u>- 3.5%</u>
Total	32,962	31,429	- 4.7%

* Other includes such problems as emotional abuse, teenaged children at large, orphaned children, etc.

Protection

INVESTIGATION



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

Protection

INVESTIGATION

OUTCOMES

- In the largest proportion of cases (42.8% - 13,453 cases) it was determined that no service was required.
- In 4,745 cases (15.1%) it was felt that no protective action was required but the families were referred to other agencies for service.
- In 4,714 cases (15.0%) families were referred to other Ministry offices for further investigation, monitoring or support.
- In 8,517 cases (27.1%) family support or protective services were provided because the children were deemed to be at risk.

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

The Ministry offers a variety of family support services to assist families to function independently and to enable children to remain within their own families and communities.

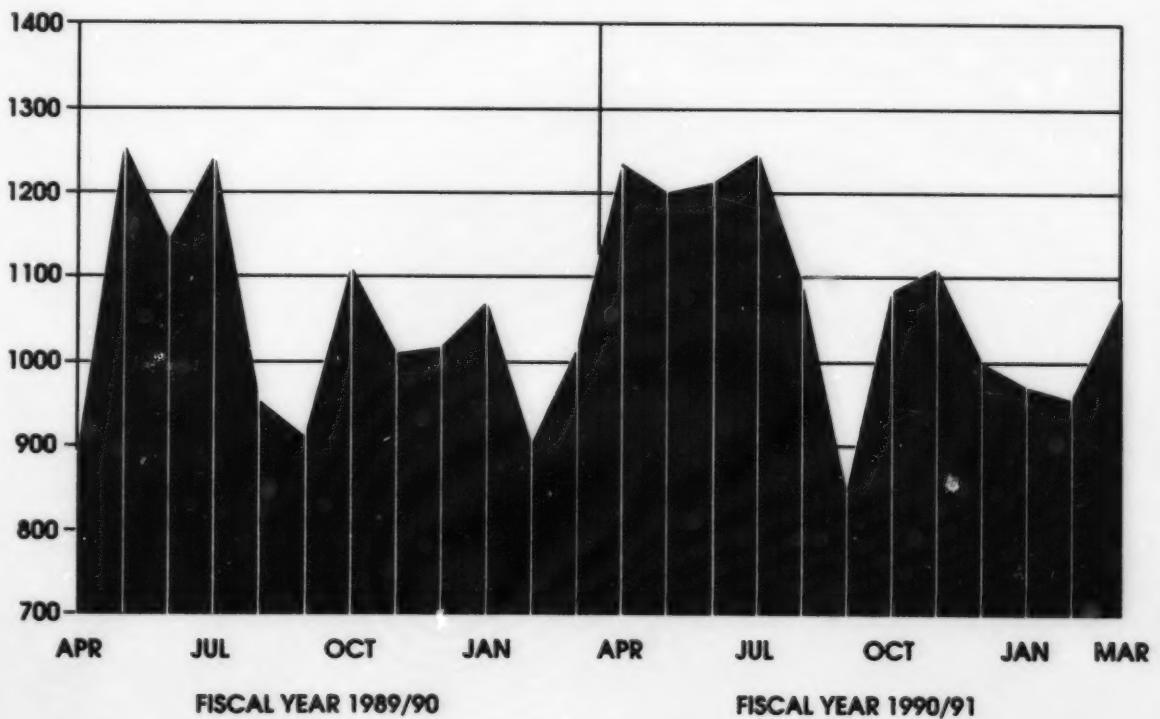
- As a result of its investigations the Ministry formulated 12,961 new or revised service plans for supporting families - a decrease of 2.6% over the previous year which reflects the decline in protection complaints.
- As in previous years, most of the plans (64.9%) involve the establishment of a Family Service file which will be managed by Ministry staff.
- Despite the overall decrease, referrals to collateral agencies grew by 14.4%. This continues the trend established during the previous year.

Family Support Services

<u>Service Plan</u>	<u>1989/90</u>	<u>1990/91</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Open Family Service File	9,236	8,411	- 8.9%
Refer to Collateral Agency	3,562	4,076	+ 14.4%
Open F&CS File & Refer	<u>510</u>	<u>474</u>	<u>- 7.1%</u>
Total	13,308	12,961	- 2.6%

Protection

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

Protection

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Selected Program Statistics 1990/91

Family Support Homemakers	- 1,947 families and individuals served per month.
Special Services to Children & Families	- 2,290 children served per month.
Intermittent (Respite) Care	- 699 children served per month.
Supervision of Returned Children	- 354 children supervised per month.

Protection

ADMISSIONS TO CARE

The Ministry is committed to maintaining children in their own family wherever possible. Where it is determined that it is not possible to provide for the safety and needs of a child within the family, the child may be admitted to the care of the Superintendent. When possible this is accomplished with the co-operation and agreement of the parents.

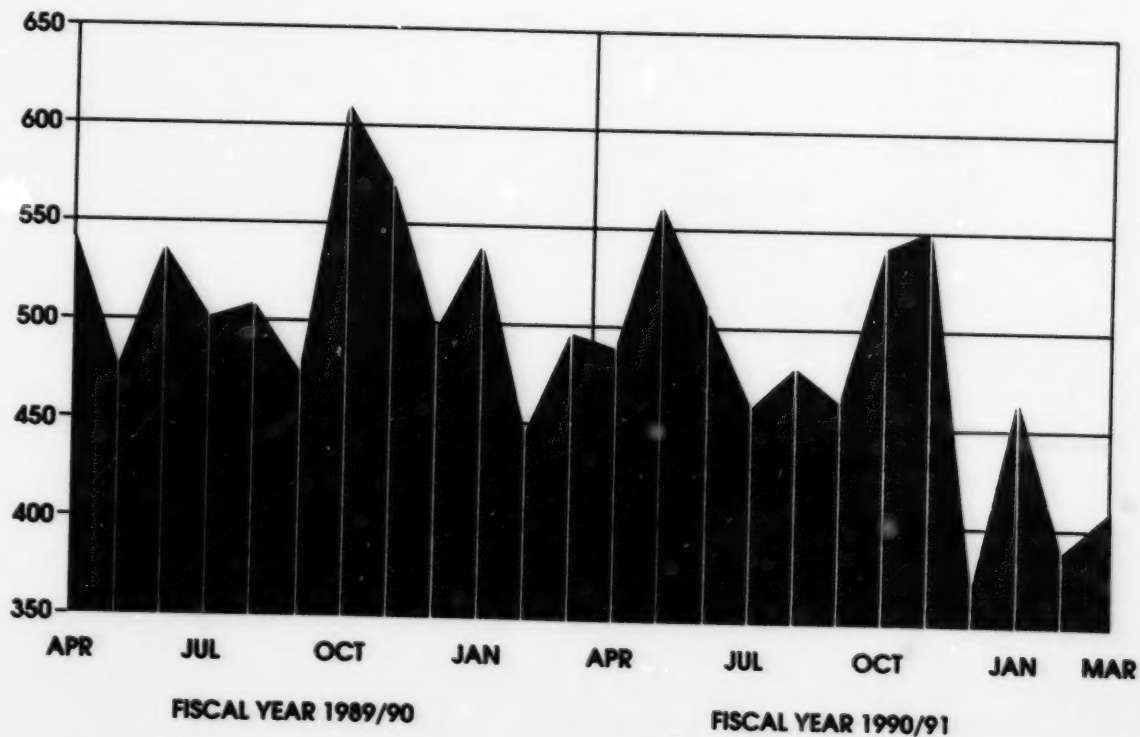
- Admissions to care totalled 5,687 during the 1990/91 fiscal year - this is a decrease of 7.7% over the previous year and likely reflects the decline in protection complaints.
- Admissions by parental agreement numbered 2,456 or 43.2% of total admissions - this represented a decrease of 8.4% over the previous year.
- Admissions by court action came to 3,183 or 56.0% of the total admissions - although this represents a decline of 7.4% over the previous year, it continues to be the largest mode of admission.
- Admissions from other jurisdictions showed a large proportional increase but the numbers are too small to be significant.
- Children who had previously been in care made up 37% of total admissions.

Admissions to Care

<u>Type</u>	<u>1989/90</u>	<u>1990/91</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Parental Agreement	2,682	2,456	- 8.4%
Court Action	3,436	3,183	- 7.4%
Other			
Province/Country	<u>42</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>+ 14.3%</u>
Total	6,160	5,687	- 7.7%

Protection

ADMISSIONS TO CARE



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

Protection

ADMISSIONS TO CARE

OUTCOMES

- In 1990/91 a total of 3,103 children were apprehended. During this year proceedings for 2,878 of these cases were completed.
- In 1,111 cases (35.8%) the Ministry decided that the parents were able, often with support, to resume care of their children and so withdrew from further court action.
- In 1,091 cases (35.2%) the children were committed to the care of the Superintendent by the courts.
- In 619 cases (19.9%) the court issued a supervision order and the children were returned to the parents.
- In 57 cases (1.8%) the courts returned the children to the parents indicating that the Ministry had not presented sufficient evidence to grant the requested order.

OVERVIEW

The primary objective of the child in care program is to provide good substitute parenting for children who are unable to live with their own families. Emphasis is placed on planning for these children to assure that both their short and long term needs are met.

The long term decline in the number of children in care continued during the 1990/91 fiscal year. On March 31, 1991 there were 6,084 children in care - down by 2.2% from the end of the previous year.

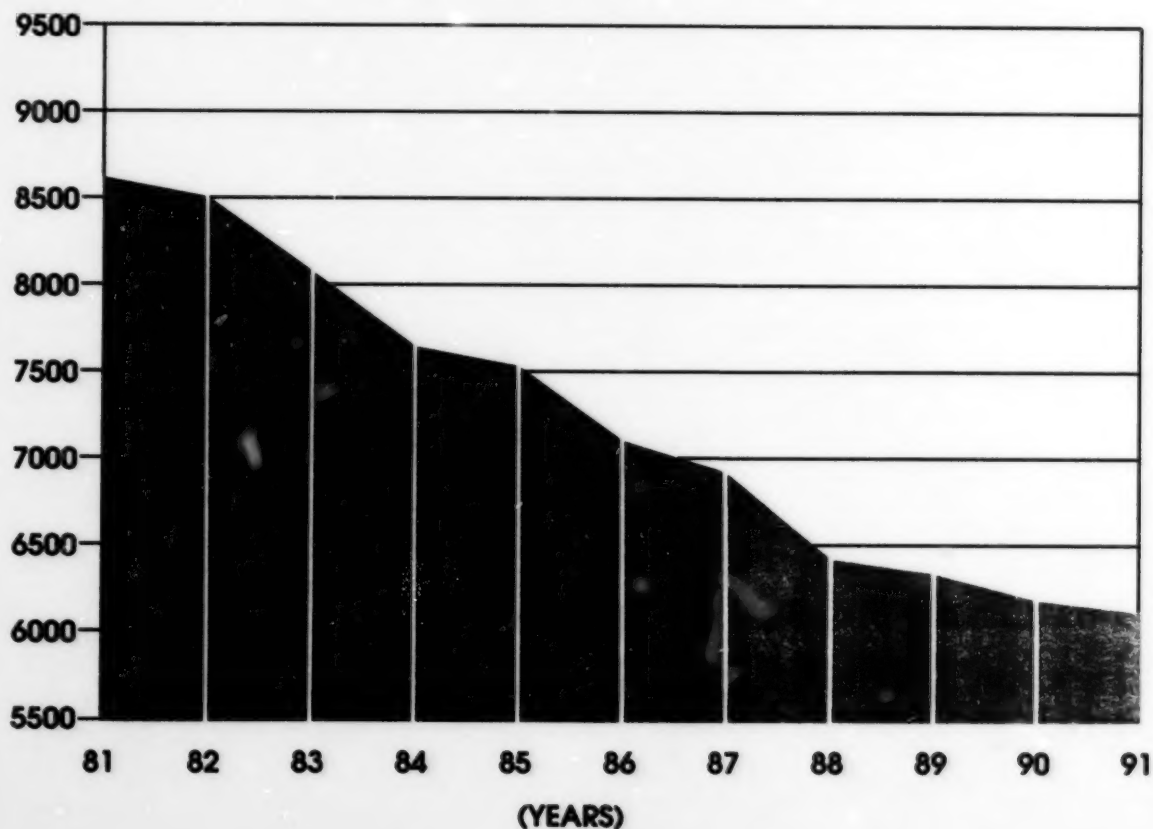
- Overall, there was a decrease in the amount of activity. Admissions declined by 7.7% over the previous year while discharges declined by 6.3% over the same time period.
- Despite an overall decline in admissions, more younger children were admitted than were discharged resulting in both an absolute and a proportional increase in these age groups.
- Conversely, more older children were discharged than were admitted resulting in a decline in these age groups.

Children in Care

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Mar. 31, 1990</u>	<u>Mar. 31, 1991</u>	<u>% Change</u>
0 - 4 years	986	1,010	+ 2.4%
5 - 9 years	901	917	+ 1.8%
10 - 14 years	1,641	1,550	- 5.5%
15 - 19 years	<u>2,696</u>	<u>2,607</u>	<u>- 3.3%</u>
Total	6,224	6,084	- 2.2%

Children in Care

TOTAL AT YEAR END



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

Children in Care

PLANNING STREAM

The Ministry's goal is to work with parents, whenever possible, towards the return of their children. Where this is not possible attempts are made to place the child within the extended family or in an alternative permanent home. This type of intensive service is handled by workers in a specialized planning stream.

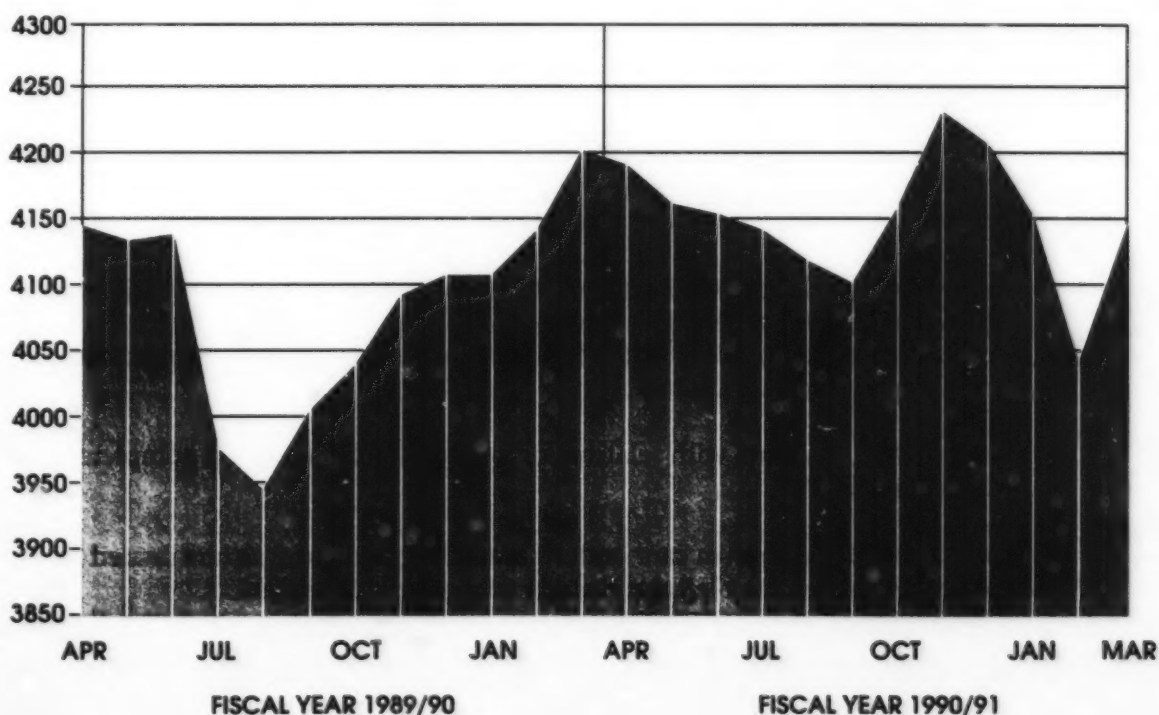
- The planning stream shows considerable month-to-month variability because it contains all the new and short term children in care.
- Despite the decline in the overall children in care caseload, the average number of children in the planning stream increased marginally to 4,148 cases during 1990/91.
- Although this increase was a modest 1.5% - these cases now make up 67.8% of the total children in care caseload.

Children in Care - Planning Stream

	<u>1989/90</u>	<u>1990/91</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Average Number of Children	4,086	4,148	+ 1.5%
Percent of Total Caseload	67.1%	67.8%	+ 0.7%

Children in Care

PLANNING STREAM



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

Children in Care

PLANNING STREAM

OUTCOMES

- In 1990/91 a total of 4,180 children in the planning stream were discharged. Most of these children (83.3%) were in care for one year or less.
- The largest group of children discharged were able to return to the parents' home because of improvements in the parents' condition or in the family situation - 2,111 children (50.5%) were returned without condition while 681 children (16.3%) were returned under supervision.
- A total of 825 children who were in care because they required special care were discharged either because the care they needed was complete or because they reached adulthood - most of the latter group would require a similar type of care as adults.
- Permanent placements with relatives or in adoption homes were completed in 299 cases (7.2%).
- Work with 255 children in care under parental agreement was terminated prematurely when they left the custody of the Superintendent.

PARENTING STREAM

Where it proves to be impossible to return a child to the immediate or extended family, the Ministry concentrates on providing good substitute parenting and on preparing the child for eventual independence. This type of service is handled by workers in the parenting stream.

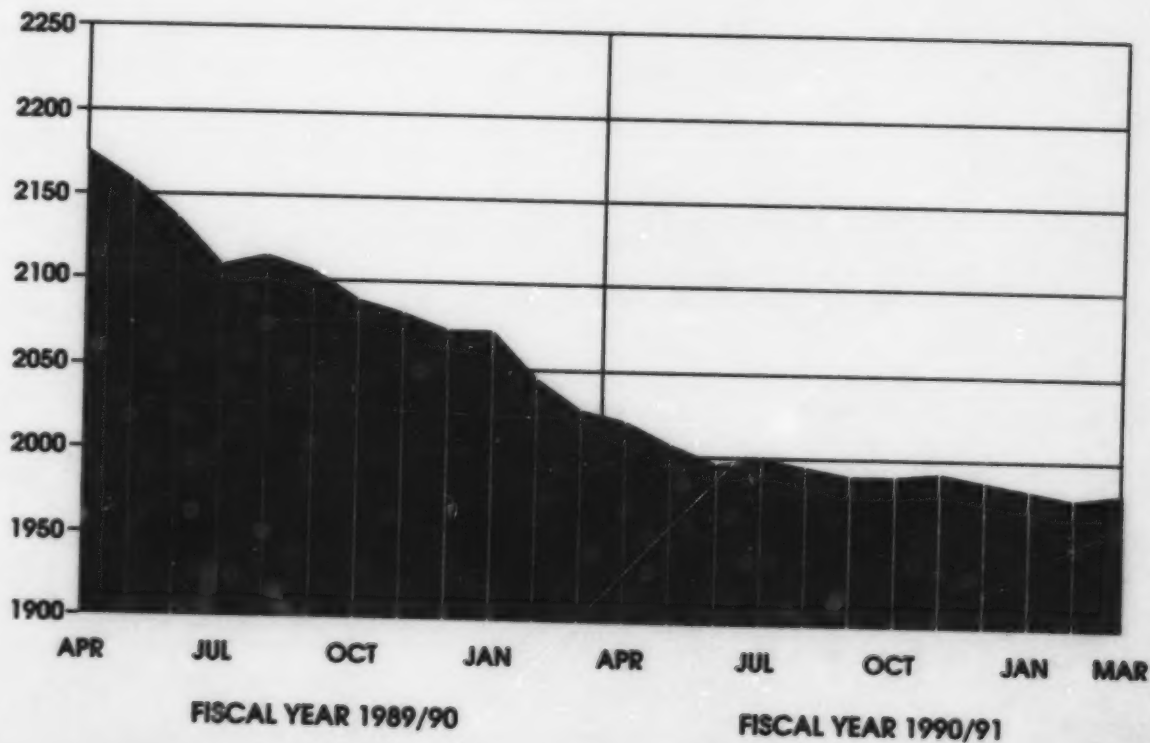
- The number of children in the parenting stream has been declining steadily - along with the decline in the number of teenagers.
- During 1990/91 an average of 1,971 cases were served - down by 6.1% over the previous year.
- The decline in the parenting cases accounts for the total decline in the overall children in care caseload - they now make up 32.2% of the caseload, down from 33.9% last year.

Children in Care - Parenting Stream

	<u>1989/90</u>	<u>1990/91</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Average Number of Children	2,099	1,971	- 6.1%
Percent of Total Caseload	33.9%	32.2%	+ 1.7%

Children in Care

PARENTING STREAM



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

Children in Care

PARENTING STREAM

OUTCOMES

- A total of 615 children were discharged from the parenting stream in 1990/91.
- A total of 547 children (88.9%) were discharged because they reached the age of majority or were married and became independent.
- A total of 64 children (10.4%) were returned to their immediate or extended family or were placed for adoption.

Adoption

PLACEMENTS

Adoption services provide for children who cannot be cared for by their birth parents and who need and can benefit from permanent family ties established through a legal process.

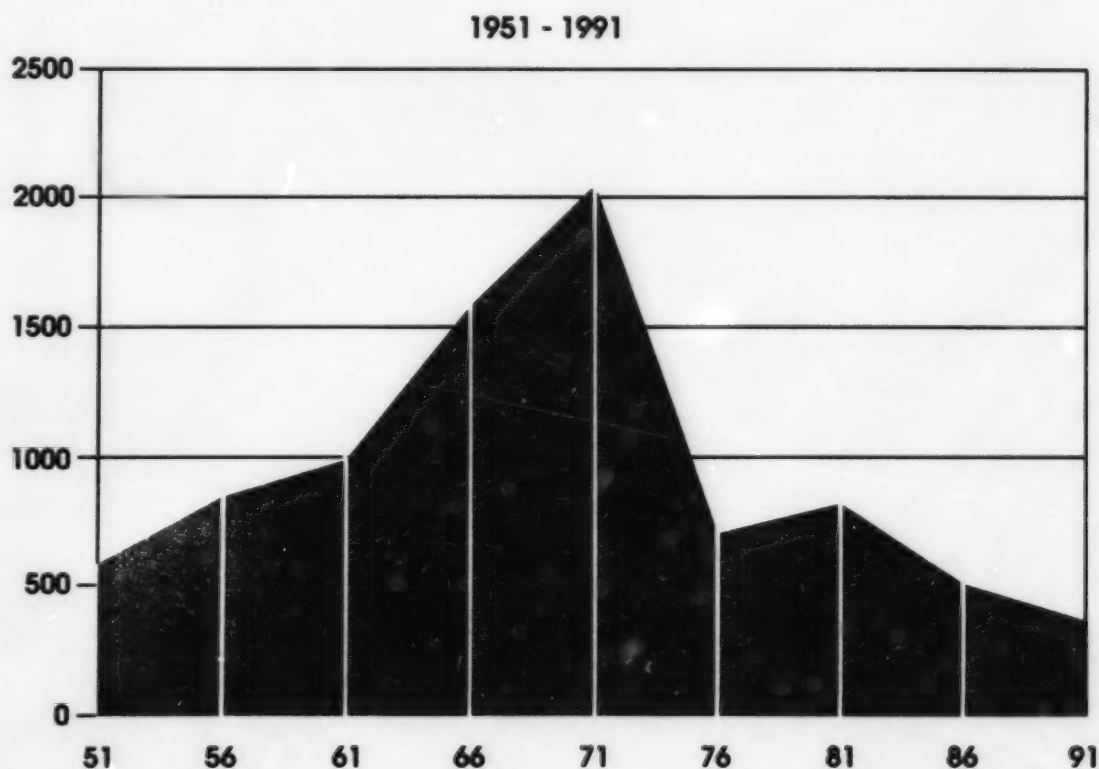
- The Ministry placed 80 healthy infants and 113 special needs children in adoptive homes in 1990/91.
- As of the end of March 1991, 2,142 homes were registered as desiring an adoption placement. At this time, applicants for infants are waiting 5 years before a home study is begun.
- The Ministry continues to recruit homes for special needs children who are older, part of a sibling group, or have significant physical, emotional or developmental handicaps.
- Post-adoption services completed 1,224 inquiries for non-identifying information for adoptees, birth parents, adoptive parents and professionals during the fiscal year.
- The passive reunion registry contained 2,149 registrations as of the end of March 1991, with 97 matches completed.

Adoption Placements

<u>Type</u>	<u>1989/90</u>	<u>1990/91</u>
Ministry		
Domestic	192	186
International	15	7
Private	<u>158</u>	<u>175</u>
Total	365	368

Adoption

AGENCY AND PRIVATE ADOPTIONS



Source: Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch

Notes